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WHY BOTHER ABOUT BEAUTY?

The philosophers invite us to distinguish between qualities that only some things have — as the blueness of blue things, the bigness of big things, or the sensibility of animals — and certain qualities that every conceivable kind of thing has. Red things cannot be described as blue, nor little things as big, nor plants as sensible. But all these things and every other, to the extent that they are perfect, have some useful place in the general scheme; all can be known about, and all can be admired. If they are less useful, less knowable, and less admirable than they should be, it is because they are less perfect. About all kinds of perfect things we can say that they are good, true, and beautiful. These kinds of predication, because they leap across all particular boundaries and transcend the limits between different sorts of things, are called transcendental predications, or just transcendentals. In the world as God intended it to be, everything is good and true and beautiful.

To the extent that things exist, they exist in the mind of God. They exist there for some divine purpose, and are good because they fulfill it. They exist there as they do in themselves, and to that extent are true. They reflect the radiance which they owe to their divine origin, and to that extent are beautiful. No conceivable being can be independent of its Creator in these ways. Everything is an instrument for the achieving of some purpose, and shares its nature with its heavenly Exemplar and shines with the glory of its integrity.

But man has free will, and can elect to contradict the divine order. Both in the process of using things supplied by nature, and in the process of making new things artificially, he can reject God's will. If he does this innocently and without knowing what he does, he will do harm to everything within the orbit of his action. If he does it with full knowledge, he adds an injury to his own soul.

An unintended contradiction of truth is a sinless falsehood; a willful contradiction of truth is a lie.

An unintended contradiction of the goodness of something created for our use is a sinless waste, but it is harmful because a good gift has been prevented from its intended end. A guilty act of waste is a sin of an order similar to that of a lie.

And so it is with beauty. An unwitting offence against the perfection of a thing either of nature or of artifice introduces a new disorder into the cosmos and the beings within that cosmos suffer. But if the act that causes ugliness and waste is deliberate, an additional disorder is added to the sinner's soul.

All the activities of the Evil One are negative. He cannot create, but he can prevent and disorder the creation of God. He cannot build, but he can pull down what has been built. It is accurate to say, therefore, that, like all sins whatsoever, sins against Truth, Goodness, and Beauty are diabolical. They are diabolical not only in their origins, but in their method and in their nature.

Everyone knows that lies are inconvenient, that waste is expensive, and that ugliness is unpleasant, but these are not the real reasons for avoiding them. Honesty is the best policy; waste not want not; I like to have pretty things around me — these are the world's reasons. The reason of the Christian for avoiding contradictions of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty are that they offend the majesty of God. We strive to avoid ugliness not because it is unpleasing to our refined sensibilities, but because, whether ignorant or sinful, it is a denial of the Divine Order.

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THE NATURE AND SHAPE OF THE CHASUBLE

The following paper is a much shortened and somewhat rearranged form of the lecture given by Father Phelan at the National Convention of the C.A.A. in Albany. It has been shortened chiefly by omitting the original discussion of the other priestly garments used at Mass — the amice, alb, cincture, stole, and maniple — and concentrating on the chasuble. At some future date Father Phelan hopes to produce a treatise that will deal not only with these, but also with all the other diaconal, priestly, and episcopal garments.

By Thomas Phelan

Erik Peterson has developed what he calls, and rightly so it seems to me, "a theology of clothing."[1] His theory is based on the fact that man, by the fall, is completely stripped of grace and of the justice, innocence, and incorruptibility which was his in the state of nature before it. "Before the fall," he writes, "man existed for God in such a way that the body was not naked, even though no man-made clothes covered it . . . grace enveloped the human person like a garment. . . . It is because man was stripped by the fall that the nudity of his body must be covered. . . . The clothing of fallen man is, in short, a remembrance of the lost garment which he wore in Paradise." Further on he adds, "stripped and naked, like fallen nature itself which 'is born naked and dies naked,' we go down into the baptismal font to receive, after the mystical death of Baptism, the white baptisimal robe, the shining garment of glory, innocence, and incorruptibility." Both by reason of the fall, and by reason of our faith, our clothing symbolizes grace lost and regained, our dignity and glory, our adopted sonship and the pledge of our future glory.

In addition to this symbolic use, clothing has three main practical functions. First of all, it is a protection of the body from extremes of heat, cold, and other physical inconveniences. Secondly, it contitutes a protection of the body from eyes, being an aid to modesty made needful by our fallen condition. Thirdly, clothing has the function of announcing publicly the status of the wearer. The function of the chasuble falls into this last category. It marks its wearer as a priest who is engaged in the performance of his priestly office.

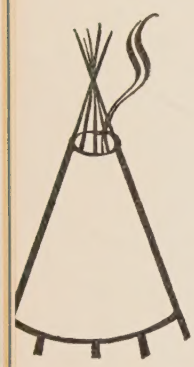
I will discuss here only the chasuble, studying its historic origins, its nature, and its shape. The chasuble is the distinctively priestly garment and preëminent among all others that are worn by the celebrant of the Sacred Mysteries. It is also the most abused of all these garments, and on a return to its proper shape the other garments depend so much for their return.

It is now universally conceded that the chasuble, like the other priestly garments, originated in the everyday dress of the Roman citizen at the beginning of the Christian era. Not many years ago it was held by some, in keeping with the 9th century opinion of Rabanus Maurus,[2] that the garments of the Christian priesthood were an adaptation of the garments of the Jewish priesthood as prescribed in the Mosaic law.[3] But such an opinion is quite untenable if we but investigate Jewish priestly garments and compare them with their Christian counterparts. Thus, although the Christian priestly garments

[1]Erik Peterson, "A Theology of Clothes" an essay in *Selections II,* edited by Cecily Hastings and Donald Nicholl (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1954).

[2]*De Institutione Clericorum,* lib 1, cap. 14.

[3]*Exodus,* 28.



were not originally different from the dress of lay citizens, they gradually became so as they remained more or less the same, while the dress of the laity changed radically.

Both Marriott[4] and Macalister[5] divide the historical development of the chasuble into three periods. In the first, or Primitive Period, which lasted for about 400 years, or at least up to the beginning of the Constantinian era, the priest's garments were identical in idea, shape, and name with the dress worn by persons of condition on occasions of festival or solemn ceremonial. The second period was that of the Invasions, and lasted roughly another four centuries until about 800. This time was characterized by overwhelming tides of invasion from the north sweeping down in succession over southern Europe. For the first time the purity of the old Latin tongue, and the dignity of the old Roman garb became distinctive marks to which the inheritors of the classical culture clung with affection, as separating them, even in outward semblance, from the revolutionary barbarism all around. Accordingly, after the older garments had disappeared from common use, they were still preserved in the state dress of Roman officialdom, and in the vestments which alone were considered seemly for the priestly celebrations. The third or final period begins with Charlemagne and his imperial reforms, and marks the full development of these garments.

"In the earlier and purer days of the Roman people," writes Macalister, "the dress which alone was recognized as the proper costume for the citizen was the toga. This was, however, one of the most inconvenient and cumbrous articles of dress ever invented—a great oblong cloth, fifteen feet by ten, thrown in a complicated manner over the left shoulder, folded in front, and hanging loose about the feet. We can hardly feel surprised at finding that, when the citizens came to regard comfort before appearance . . . a more convenient form of this outdoor costume was adopted. There were three varieties of this new garment, the *paenula,* the *casula,* and the *planeta."*[6] All three were probably much the same in general shape, differing chiefly in material, costliness, and the social usages with which they at different times were associated. The word *casula* is the diminutive of *casa,* a house, and probably refers to the fact that the garment enveloped the whole body. As the house itself is a cosmic symbol, the "little house" is naturally a very suitable vestment for the Catholic priest, his body on this earth, but his head (thoughts) and hands (deeds) in the super-terrestrial regions. The available evidence suggests that all three of these garments had the general shape of a cloak enveloping the body, and sewn up the front. It was put on by being passed over the head. The word *casula,* from which we derive our English *chasuble* was not used for the vestment of the Christian ministry before the 9th century. Before that time the word *planeta* was the one in general use.

During the ceremony of ordination when the Bishop places the still folded chasuble over the shoulders of the young man who is to receive the office of mediator, he says the words: "Receive the priestly vestment, which signifies charity, for God has the power to increase in you and perfect charity." The young man receives a deep impression that this garment, in a very real sense, covers him with the charity of God. He remembers the psalm *"Ecce quam bonum"*[7] in which charity is compared to the precious oil which is poured over the head of Aaron and completely covers his clothing. He thinks of the great flowing priestly garments with which the effigies of Chartres and myriad other Christian monuments are covered.

[4]Rev. Wharton B. Marriott, *Vestiarium Christianum* (London: Rivingtons, 1868).

[5]R. A. S. Macalister, *Ecclesiastical Vestments: Their Development and History* (London: Elliot Stock, 1896).

[6]*Ibid.,* pp. 42-43.

[7]Ps. 132.

He has read that St. Isidore of Seville, presiding over the 4th Council of Toledo in 633, said, "The name *(casula)* is a diminutive from *casa,* a house, because, like a little house, it covers the whole man."

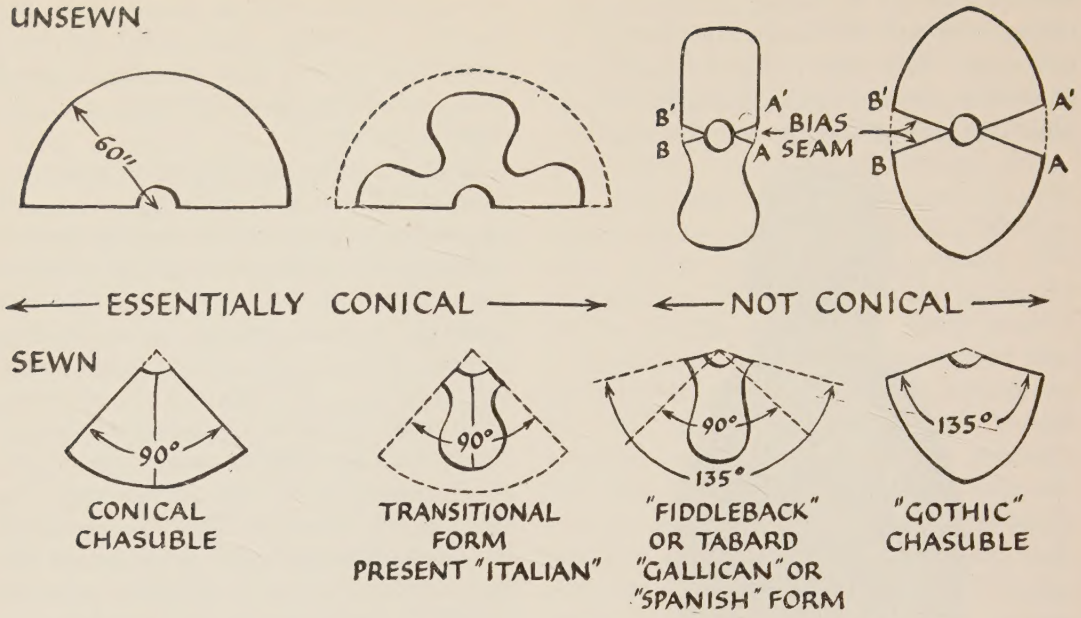
Medieval English priest wearing conical chasuble. From a grave relief in a village church in Sussex, England.

The typical chasuble is conical, the tip of the cone being removed to allow an opening for the head. The hands are exposed by lifting up the sides of the garment. It is therefore essential that the material used should not be too stiff or too heavy. The cloth is cut in a half circle, with a usual radius of 60 inches, the two radial edges being brought together and sewn in a seam, which falls in front from the wearer's neck to his feet. Until the 16th century it retained this primitive conical form, remaining an enveloping and encircling garment.

It then became the custom to make the chasuble of rich and costly materials, and the embroideries and incrustations used so stiffened and weighted the garment that it was difficult if not impossible for the celebrant to raise and free his hands. But instead of meeting this difficulty by returning to simpler and lighter stuffs, the vestment makers, with a regard for appearance rather than for essence which was typical of the period, met it by cutting away the sides of the chasuble. This shortening of the sides proceeded progressively until the garment had become a tabard, a garment which is well suited to its medieval purpose of the display of armorial bearings by heralds, but which is not an enveloping or a priestly garment, and is certainly not a *casula.* We are familiar with this degenerate form today under the colloquial name of "fiddleback." With the Gallican and Spanish styles of "fiddleback," the shoulder construction, until then a pointed 90 degrees, was further modified so as to fit more comfortably. The French and Spanish vestment makers destroyed any vestige of the conical form and unity which might still be left in the "fiddleback" by changing the shoulder angle to about 135 degrees.

With the Gothic Revival of the 19th century, there were attempts to return to the appearance of the pre-Renaissance chasuble, but these attempts were based on an amplification of the Gallican and Spanish "fiddleback" tabard with its 135 degree shoulder angle, rather than on a simple return to the 90 degree conical form. We know the compromise which was arrived at by the name of the "Gothic" chasuble, but it was Gothic in the revivalist sense rather than the medieval.

There are three main objections to this enlarged angle at the shoulders and sides.



The first and most basic is an objection from the use of cloth. John V. D. KilBride, the silk weaver and vestment-maker of Ditchling Common, Sussex, expressed it this way in a letter:

> The shape you sketched, with an angle between the shoulder line of something between 90° and 180° is easy enough to draw but not so easy to make, that is to say, not so easy to make in a suitable and reasonable manner. In fact, it is a garment that starts as a sketch, or at least as a shape pictured in imagination, whereas the real shape started as cloth, out of which the garment developed according to the ways in which cloth can be economically and reasonably handled. The 90° chasuble derived from a semi-circle of cloth, with the straight edge folded over in the middle and the two borders sewn together, leaving an aperture for the head. . . . Your 135° shape derives from a mistaken reconstruction of the old chasuble as just a kind of 'Gothic'-shaped garment, to be made up anyhow, provided it was loose and pointed at the bottom. They were started, in Pugin's time, by cutting out a flat back and front and sewing them together down the shoulder. This violation of the structural unity of a cloak-like garment has largely died out now.[8] But to make such a shaped garment with front and back upright seams in the traditional manner means that the cloth has to be cut on the bias for one of the seams. The biased seam hangs badly and inevitably stretches and drops with time, and as the orphrey covering it has no reason for dropping, the ultimate result is a line of unsightly pouches down each edge of the orphrey. The 90° chasuble, folding over on the square, has no such trouble, as the cloth is straight front and back. It has also, when laid out in two parts, practically no waste at all in the cutting, and is most economical to make, whereas the 135° shape sprawls diagonally across the cloth, cutting great pieces away uselessly. It is not, in short, an article growing naturally out of its materials and the ways of working it, with its 'looks' the result of these, but one starting from 'looks,' namely, at the wrong end.

This is the first objection to the "Gothic" shape, that it implies a certain violation of the basic nature of cloth, which is not found in the conical type. The second objection is similar. The conical chasuble displays a certain integrity or simplicity of form, due to the fact that it is made of a single simply shaped piece of cloth which is sewn up into a simple geometric shape, the cone. The "Gothic" chasuble lacks the dignity which these simplicities give to the older garment. Thirdly, the "Gothic"

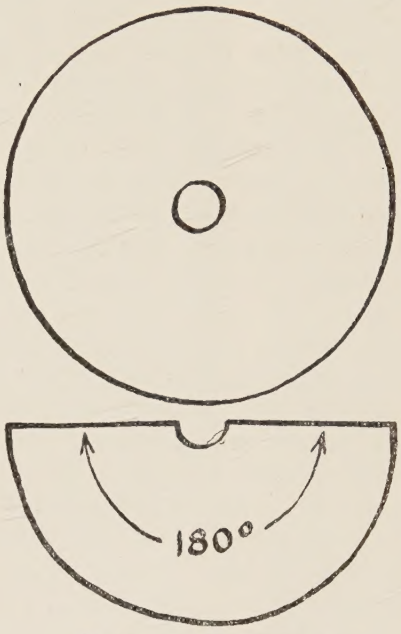
[8]Not in America.

chasuble does not truly envelop the wearer. As an enlarged "fiddleback," it still keeps some of the quality of that appurtenance.

Another modern solution to the "fiddleback" problem, is the full circle chasuble. This is a circle with a radius of 60 inches, or an ellipse with a maximum dimension of 120 inches, at the center of each of which is a hole for the head. This shape is not a traditional one, but, after the true semi-circular shape, has probably the most to recommend it. It is certainly enveloping and priestly. The objections to it are, first, that it is very wasteful of material; second, that it cannot be made out of a single piece of cloth as the width required is fantastic and so the unity of the cloth is destroyed; and, third, it hangs in vertical folds which provide no contrast with the vertical folds of the undergarment, the alb, as do in a beautiful manner the horizontally enveloping folds of the true cone.

Let me list what I believe to be the chief excellences of the conical or 90 degree chasuble. The first is that it is the traditional form. It is the *planeta* of the Romans, the *casula* of the third and final period of the development of the Christian vestments. This is evident from the study of ancient and medieval monuments and paintings. There is no other way to account for the draping of the garment except to identify it with the conical shape. The number of examples from which this generalization is drawn is very great indeed. In addition, the fact that our rubrics direct the deacon and sub-deacon to raise the chasuble at the sides during the incensation at a solemn Mass can be explained as necessary only by the use of the conical shape. This rubric is a relic of the days when chasubles had sides that could and needed to be raised.

But historicity alone does not justify a shape. It is the integrity of the conical chasuble that best recommends it. The conical chasuble is the garment of integrity. It has material integrity in that the seam is not biased. The two radial edges meet each other squarely with warps parallel to warps, woofs to woofs. And there is a minimum of wasted material, which, with such precious cloth as is suitable to a priestly garment, is a matter of some concern, especially to the weaver of the cloth. It is also the form that most



FULL CIRCLE

perfectly expresses the idea of envelopment and dedication which is expressed in the name, *casula.* It is a little house, a shell that separates one world from another. It is quite similar in shape to many primitive wigwams and tepees, as of our Plains' Indians. Wearing the conical chasuble the priest shows that his thoughts are above the sky and his hands engaged in heavenly work.

The conical chasuble is also the garment of beauty. It is sometimes objected that it is difficult to wear, but this is only a difficulty for those who do not know how to wear it. When made of a suitable weight and texture of material and when managed correctly it is very beautiful indeed. A great deal might be said on this matter, but a few words of advice may be useful. If when putting the chasuble on, the wearer

throws some of the material which is over his arms to the back, thus shortening the front, and if he gathers the material that is over his arms into his elbows, turning the outer edge of the material under, the first effect is comfort and ease in wearing. Another effect is the beauty in the lines brought about by such draping. There are strong horizontal folds in front, and less pronounced ones behind, curving up to the arms and contrasting with the vertical folds of the alb showing beneath. Another objection is answered if the chasuble is made with a slight tuck at the shoulders, allowing the garment to lie flat there. Without this tuck, this flatness is not possible, because of the 90 degree angle of the sides.

Besides shape, a word might be added about other problems arising out of vestment design. The colors of the chasuble and the proper materials for it are controlled by Church legislation. The colors now prescribed evolved at an early period and it seems unlikely that they will soon be modified. A fairly loosely woven raw silk, preferably plain, but figured if there is some good reason for it, is usually the best from the point of view of graceful draping. As to decoration, this is a field in which there has been, and still is, grave abuse, and a word or two might be said about it. There would seem to be four good types of solution to the problem of chasuble ornamentation.

The first is to have no ornament at all, as was generally the case in the early centuries of the Christian era. This is perfectly acceptable and quite beautiful since the material and the lines are thereby allowed to show themselves without distraction.

The second is to cover the seams and neckband with braids or orphreys. In practically all traditional cultures there is a tendency in design to emphasize structure by ornamenting those parts which indicate the nature of the structure. In the case of sewn clothing these parts are chiefly the seams. This design tendency was contradicted by the Renaissance, and has only reappeared in the last century, but whether fashionable or unfashionable it is certainly a good one, and has its application here. This use of orphreys appears in the third period of vestment development, and has been responsible for the mistaken notion that every chasuble should be decorated with a cross.

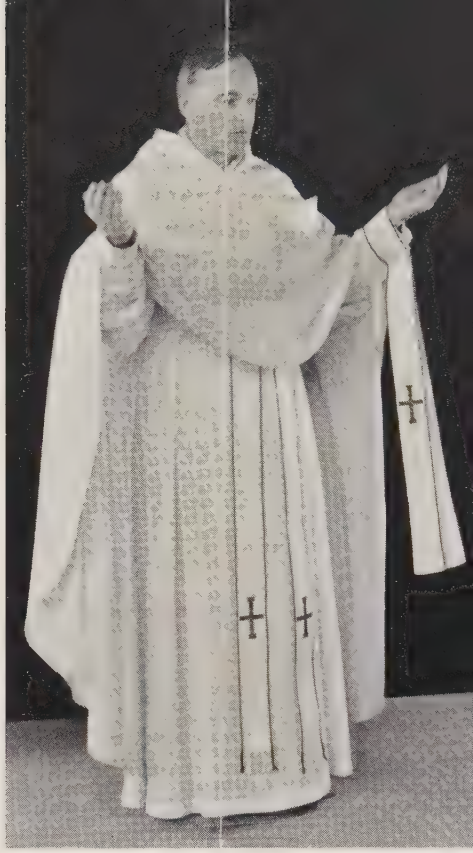
The third solution which, to my knowledge, is not in use today, but may have been used in the high Middle Ages, is to repeat some symbol all over the chasuble in such a way as to bring out its cosmic significance, thus developing the idea already expressed in the color. For example, a white vestment might be covered with fishes, a green one with flowers, or a black one with stars. This could be done either in embroidery or in light applique.

And finally a single symbol could be worked on either the back or the front, not to bring out a cosmic idea, but to amplify the symbolism of the prescribed color. Thus a mustard tree on a green chasuble, or the Sun of Justice on a white one, or the Gate of Death in the walls of the Heavenly City on a black one may tell us something more than we already realize about the intention of the canonical colors.

In conclusion, may I simply say that the abuses wrought on our priestly garments over the last several centuries, have tended to destroy both their natures and their beauty along with the destruction of their proper shapes. As we most frequently see them today, the priestly garments are not clothing symbolical of grace lost and regained through the great mystery of the Redemption. They are certainly not a fitting garb for the mediator between God above and man here below when he is performing the most sacred function of his mediatorship. As Catholic artists and as Catholic patrons of art, it is up to us to begin the restoration of these important garments, so that, once again, they will be fit clothing for God's mediators.

The chalice is placed on the altar before Mass. The priest approaches the altar with the chasuble closed, his arms crossed underneath.

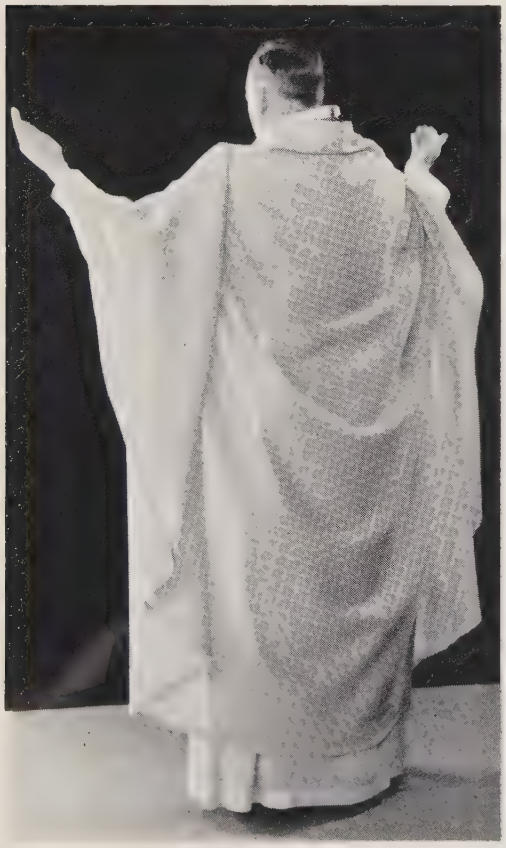
The sign of the cross is made with the hand covered.



Going up the steps to the altar. The chasuble is gathered up with both hands.

These photographs suggest ways in which the conical chasuble might be worn in our times.

These white chasubles are the work of S. M. Augustina Flueler Monastery of St. Clare, Stans, Switzerland



At the canon. Rear view.

Before distributing Holy Communion, the chasuble is again thrown back over the right shoulder.

Mother at Prayer, marble about life size.
Collection of the Art Gallery of To

Ivan Mestrovic

CHRIST AS TEKTON

Dr. Furfey is a member of our Advisory Board. The following article, reprinted here in abbreviated form and without notes and references from Volume 17 of The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, *may be regarded as a piece of advice from our advisor. We have commonly been taught to regard our Lord's professional status as a shame which his humility accepted rather than as a part of his human perfection. He is usually presented to us as "just a carpenter," "a member of the working class," as a "worker," rather than as a free craftsman or artist. Dr. Furfey here gives us good authority for believing that we should regard Christ as a skillful provider of good things needed by his neighbors, which is the classical definition of the artist as such. It is good for us who aspire to be artists ourselves, to realize that we should look to Christ as an exemplar of the virtue of art, as well as of all other virtues.*

by the Rev. Paul Hanley Furfey, Ph.D.

When our Lord revisited Nazareth during his public life and preached in the synagogue there, the townspeople were amazed at his wisdom and miracles; for they had known him simply as "the TEKTON" and the "son of the TEKTON," and it seemed incredible that he should now appear in a very different role. His fellow villagers who had known Christ for years obviously saw nothing about his manner of life very different from that of the usual Galilean TEKTON of the time. The purpose of this article is to examine the available evidence to learn what the life of such a workman was like and what socio-economic position he occupied. This should throw some light on the hidden life of Christ.

The Latin Fathers, misled by the ambiguity of the word *faber,* usually held that Christ and St. Joseph were blacksmiths. Nevertheless the translation "woodworker" for TEKTON may now be accepted as certain. In the larger centers of population there were specialists within the trade of the TEKTON and we hear, for example, of yoke makers, wheel makers, or bedmakers; but it seems quite safe to assume that no such specialization had appeared at Nazareth and that our Lord and St. Joseph made and repaired all the wooden objects of any sort that were used in the vicinity.

It is worth remarking here that the "carpenter" of the English versions is a poor translation of TEKTON. It is too narrow. A carpenter is only one specific kind of worker in wood, one, namely, who builds and repairs houses and other structures, whereas TEKTON is a general term, as has just been stated, and includes not only carpenters, but also cabinetmakers, shipbuilders, wheelwrights, and those who practice the other wood working crafts. As we shall see presently, not much carpentry was involved in the construction of the sort of houses on which our Lord probably worked. It is quite likely that he devoted the greater part of his time to other types of woodworking, the fabrication of furniture and other wooden objects. To call him a "carpenter" is to use the word in a rather loose sense.

Sources of information about the ancient TEKTON and his work are far less satisfactory than one might wish. Wood is a perishable material, and, except in the dry climate of Egypt, few specimens of ancient woodwork have been preserved. There is nothing in our museums to parallel the rich collections of ceramics which make it possible to trace the history of the potter's craft in detail. However, a few tools have come down to us and some graphic representations of woodworkers in action. Archeology yields information on the general

character of the ancient house and its furnishings and the extent to which wood was used in constructing them. Here and there references to woodworking occur in the Greek and Latin classics, but only a few writers, such as Theophrastus and Vitruvius, give directly relevant information. The *Misna* and occasionally other rabbinic writings, furnish a good deal of important material; for Jewish casuistry, being concerned with the minutiae of everyday life, involved the discussion of a good many common objects and homely activities. If what can be learned from these various scattered sources of information is modified in the light of what is known specifically about conditions in first-century Galilee, the result is the best available picture of the status and activities of Christ as TEKTON.

WOODWORKING PRODUCTS

Some of our Lord's work must have been on houses — carpentry in the proper sense. In his day, as throughout all the history of Jewish Palestine, the common type of private house had walls of stone or mud brick. The roof was formed by placing beams, which might be squared or left in the round, from wall to wall, filling in the space between them with branches and brushwood, and then covering the whole with a thick layer of lime marl. The very poorest houses contained only a single room which the family might share with domestic animals. However, most houses probably had two or more rooms, and a second story would not be uncommon.

It is clear from the foregoing that wood was used far less freely in the construction of ancient Palestinian houses than in modern houses. Nevertheless our Lord's activities in this connection must have called for a rather wide range of skills. Preparing the roof beams and putting them in place was rough work. They would have to be cut to length and then they might be squared with an adze. Carpentry would be necessary not only for construction but also for repairs, if a roof beam threatened to fall or actually fell. Making and repairing doors, door frames, windows, and their fittings would have called for a much higher degree of skill. The modern carpenter simply installs doors and windows previously fabricated by machine; the ancient carpenter had to make them as well as install them. There is no reason to believe that our Lord's skill as a carpenter was employed exclusively on the simplest and poorest buildings, although at a place like Nazareth much of his work would be of that sort. Even Nazareth had a synagogue and there may have been other public buildings and private residences in the vicinity elaborate enough to demand a high quality of craftmanship.

The standard for house furnishing in ancient Palestine was simple. A bed and a table and a stool and a lampstand were considered adequate for a bedroom. St. Justin says that our Lord made plows and yokes. It is just possible that this statement preserves an oral tradition; if so, it would be a very valuable one as St. Justin was born in Palestine only a couple of generations after the death of Christ. More probably, however, he is merely giving a random illustration of the sort of work a TEKTON would do. The wooden plows and yokes were probably not altogether unlike those that have been used there in recent times. If so, they were very simply constructed. No doubt our Lord made these implements for the farmers in the vicinity; and if someone needed a new threshing sledge, a threshing wagon, or a winnowing fork, he was the natural person to turn to. In short, the unspecialized woodworking in which he engaged probably covered the whole range from small knife handles to huge beams, from simple benches to elaborate cabinets. Christ made and repaired whatever wooden objects were used at Nazareth in his time.

It seems to be rather commonly assumed that the work of our Lord and St. Joseph

was of the crudest and simplest sort. This assumption is entirely gratuitous — and not very flattering. Of course, we do not actually *know* what sort of work was done in the shop at Nazareth; but in the absence of better evidence the most plausible guess

is that the work covered the whole range of wooden objects current at that time and place and this range was probably broad enough to include at least some very skillful and fairly elaborate work.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Sophisticated woodworking techniques appeared in history at surprisingly early dates. Here the Egyptian evidence is particularly significant. Inlay and flat dowels appeared in the First Dynasty. Mortise and tenon joints, miter joints, and plywood were used in the Third Dynasty and dovetailing was used in the Fourth Dynasty or perhaps earlier. By the Eighteenth Dynasty veneering had reached a high perfection and hinges were much like those we now use. Both animal glue and fish glue were used in classical antiquity. Nails were available, but expensive, and they were used far less freely than they now are. The principle of the screw was understood, but screws were not used for fastening wood. The need of seasoning wood before using it was well realized. The ancients distinguished carefully the types of wood that should be left in the round and those that should be split or sawed or hewn into shape. For smoothing surfaces, fishskin was used as we use abrasive paper.

The tools and techniques of woodworking remained remarkably static from very early in the history of civilization until the comparatively recent introduction of power-driven machinery. Our Lord used methods that were already of immemorial antiquity in his day, and the methods used by a woodworker in colonial America would not have been very different from them. It is very important to realize that the traditional tools and techniques are perfectly adequate to work of the highest quality. Machinery makes it possible to work wood with far less effort and with far greater speed, but the result is not necessarily better than the product of hand craftsmanship. It is likewise important to avoid the fallacy of assuming that, because our Lord lived a long time ago and lacked some modern tools, the products of his workmanship were therefore necessarily crude and unfinished. The methods of his day were time-consuming, but they could produce excellent results.

Just as there is no reason to hold that the products of Christ's craftsmanship were crudely executed, so there is no reason to hold that they were ugly or inartistic. He was a man of the common people and his work would fall into the category of folk art, but this fact implies no inferiority. The products of folk industry often show a freshness and vigor that make them compare favorably with the more sophisticated but more conventional art of the academies. The parables of Christ were couched in the simple language of the common man, but they are great literature. Is it unreasonable to suppose that his woodworking was somewhat parallel in quality, that it was simple and unornamented, but beautiful in its severe functionalism?

MATERIALS

Probably a fair variety of different kinds of wood were available for use in the shop at Nazareth. This is not surprising, however, for all the lands bordering the Mediterranean, except Tripoli, form a single plant region. Lebanon and northern Syria

were famous lumber-producing regions throughout antiquity. Palestine itself was less fortunate, but it was probably a good deal better forested in antiquity than it has been in recent times. The bulk of Christ's work was doubtless done with the most readily obtainable of local woods, but even among these there was probably some room for choice and it needed skill to choose just the right wood for a specific purpose. Then again, as has been said already, there is no reason to suppose that our Lord's work was limited exclusively to the fabrication of the cheapest and simplest objects. When he had an exacting job to do, he was probably able to obtain wood adequate for the purpose.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

When our Lord's fellow villagers identified him as "the" woodworker and the son of "the" woodworker, their implication would seem to be that there was only one woodworking shop in Nazareth, namely, the one of which the proprietor had been St. Joseph and later our Lord himself. Of course, this would be plausible on other grounds in any case; for it is unlikely that a place the size of Nazareth could support more than one woodworking establishment. Itinerant craftsmen could find work on large construction projects in those days as now, but there is nothing in the New Testament to imply that our Lord belonged in that category. Again, there was some industrial production in the ancient world by slaves or hired workmen under the direction of capitalists, but it seems improbable that anything like this existed at Nazareth. All in all, it seems reasonably safe to assume that Christ and St. Joseph were self-employed and that they operated their own modest shop. This was, indeed, the usual form of economic organization for craft workers in the classical world.

In the light of the facts just reviewed, there seems no reason to believe that the Holy Family was conspicuously in want, as judged by working-class standards of first century Palestine. Our Lord's poverty was the poverty of his class; for workingmen and their families lived very poorly not only in Palestine, but throughout the ancient world. With only occasional exceptions, an abundance of cheap labor was generally available and wages did not tend to rise much above the subsistence level. The Holy Family doubtless merged inconspicuously into this general poverty.

The social status of the craftsman was notoriously low among the Greeks and Romans; but there is plenty of evidence that this status was very much higher among the Jews. The rabbinical writings praise work in general and the handicrafts in particular. Few of the famous rabbis enjoyed an independent income and they were not ashamed to support themselves by the work of their hands. But these same famous rabbis, who were not in the least snobbish about manual work, were exceedingly snobbish about their Pharisaic observances and looked down on the common man who did not share their customs. If our Lord's social status was low, as it undoubtedly was, it was not because he practiced a manual trade, but because he lacked the marks of status that were valued in his day, the money of the rich, the political power of the Roman officials and their allies among the Jews, and the religious prestige of the Pharisees.

SUMMARY

Our Lord was a TEKTON which means not a carpenter, but a general woodworker. There is no reason to assume, as many do, that his work was altogether simple and crude. On the contrary, there is good ground for supposing that he practiced a highly skilled craft. It must have taken much skill to make the variety of objects a TEKTON would be expected to make, doors, locks, window lattices, tables, chairs, beds, chests, yokes, and plows, among other things. Enough wood of different sorts was probably available to permit some leeway in adapting the proper wood

to the proper use. Tools were doubtless few and simple, but experience has shown that elaborate tools are by no means necessary for excellent woodworking. It seems safe to presume that our Lord was an excellent craftsman.

Probably St. Joseph and our Lord after him were self-employed, owning their own small woodworking shop. There is no reason to believe that the income of the Holy Family compared unfavorably with that of the average family of Nazareth. Hand labor was held in honor among the Jews and the family did not suffer from the sort of white-collar snobbery that we know in our own day. Our Lord's socio-economic position was probably fairly typical of the working-class people of Galilee, being neither conspicuously higher nor conspicuously lower than the average. If he was poor and lowly, he was so not as an individual, but as a rather average member of a poor and lowly group. Throughout his public life he stood forth consistently as a member of this group, never compromising with the rich or the Pharisees. By his divine membership in it, he has forever blessed the working class.

MORE ON CREATIVE IMAGINATION

"The operation of the creative imagination is weakened by introspection and by the attempt to produce in the object qualities of design which the imagination naturally supplies. It is strengthened by the actual making of works of art."
Excerpt from Constitution of the C.A.A.

Mr. Stephen Berardi asked for an amplification of this passage and in the Michaelmas 1955 issue, one was offered. It distinguished between the activities of discursive reason and of imagination, stating that the first normally uses means which are paralyzing to the second. It said that formal beauty (as distinct from functional, material, and instrumental beauty) is a natural product of the healthy imagination and can be achieved by no other means; and further, that attempts to reproduce it by discursive methods not only fail but are injurious to the imagination itself.

This explanation was not satisfactory to all readers as is evident from a request for further clarification in these words recently received:

> *I am confused when you ask for the complete lack of regard for the formal cause. This year my second year students have done a series of exercises as in Scott's* Design Fundamentals, *and it has done wonders for them. . . . Are we off the track?*

The following is the reply to this request for further elucidation of what seems a most important point.

It is certainly far from our intention to disregard the formal cause. As an imaginative product the health of the formal cause depends on the health of the imagination, and this faculty must therefore be protected from any and every influence that might damage its functioning. If his imagination does not function freely and normally, the designer either gives up creative work altogether or tries to achieve the effect of imaginative power by means of extra-imaginative methods. He tries to achieve, without using his image-making faculty, what can only properly be achieved by that faculty.

We all admire the imaginative power of young children and regret its disappearance in their drawing when they get to be ten or so years old. But on consideration, it seems doubtful if the imagination of the youngsters is actually stronger and clearer than that of adolescents and adults. What happens to the ten-year-old is not so much a decline in imaginative power as an interference with its functioning. At this time he begins to compare his work

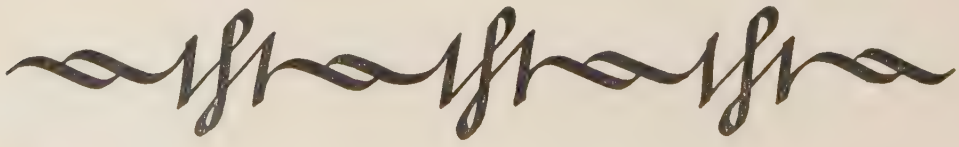
with that of adults or with the appearance of things, and he begins to feel shame and to worry. His strength had been in his ability to transfer his image to paper at once, while it was still burning hot and sparkling with interest. But now, concern with his new insights slows him down. He looks up at the ceiling and chews the end of his pencil, and as he does so, his vision fades and the bright image grows dull. Unless he can somehow recover his first imaginative enthusiasm, or somehow generate another, he is lost. He will do nothing good that day. He will soon be discouraged and will reach for the copy book, the color wheel, the rhyming dictionary, the root rectangle, or whatever other crutch or prop seems to promise the best support for his faltering imagination. The immediate problem for the teacher is one of keeping the iron hot until the smith can get it onto his anvil and give it a few shaping biffs with the hammer.

Miss de Bethune has developed a simple but effective method of dealing with this type of difficulty in artists young and old. She gives them paper of various colors, paste, and scissors; tells them to represent St. Peter's sorrow, or the third day of creation, or what not; and that the work must be complete in fifteen minutes. The use of the collage technique helps them to forget old failures with pencil or brush. The clear definition of subject obviates their groping for that, and helps to sharpen the image. And the time limit forbids them to relax into a paralyzed hopelessness which may have become habitual. The method has been successful, and even were it not, would remain a carefully thought out attempt to meet directly the real imaginative problem. The various devices for circumventing the problem, attractive and impressive as many of them appear, are in an entirely different category.

I have not had occasion to study Scott's *Design Fundamentals* and so, to refer again to the analogy used in the first reply, cannot tell whether his method should be classed as crackers-and-milk or as alka-seltzer. From a rapid glance at the book, however, I would hazard a guess that it is a mixture of nutritive and analgesic elements. The vagueness of his quite un-Aristotelian treatment of formal casuality is rather discouraging, and does not even advance us far enough to meet the problem we are discussing. On the other hand, the fact that such good results have been obtained from its use, certainly suggests that many of the exercises are strengthening rather than weakening to the creative faculty.

Up to a certain point of adequacy, things may be made with but little help from this faculty — buildings, clothes, machines — but no really perfect and humane works can be achieved without its normal functioning. A formal cause is an image, and an image comes from an imagination and from nowhere else. Bits of geometric lore and relationships seen on the color chart, like rhymes in the rhyming dictionary, and quotations from Bartlet, may occasionally stimulate the imagination to activity, but they are dangerous drugs to give a child. Their more than occasional use may end in swamping the imagination altogether.

Science is the knowledge of things that are already true. Art is the envisaging and the bringing into existence of things still to be made. And knowing and making have a proper relationship to each other. *Ars sine scientia nihil.* But if their relationship is not proper, the artistic virtue is crippled, and it is crippled at its imaginative source.



THE CHRISTMAS STAR

TEN YEARS AGO

CHRISTMAS, 1945, VOL. IX, NO. 1

DANTE did but give concise expression to a universal human conviction when he wrote (*Convito* III, 12) that there is "no visible thing in all the world more worthy to serve as a type of God than the sun." Everywhere and at all times serious minded men and women have seen in the sun, and in the stars — recognized as in some way little suns and among these particularly the apparently motionless pole star — analogues of the simplicity, centrality, and transcendence of the Universal Creator. From him all blessings flow, and to him all things are referred as to their source and origin. Traditional representations of sun or star, therefore, are essentially points from which rays radiate. The rays are simply manifestations of the center, that which IS. Suns and stars (and it is often impossible to know which analogue is intended, for the meaning and treatment are the same) are traditionally represented as points with a varying number of lines raying from them; but stars of six and eight rays strongly predominate.

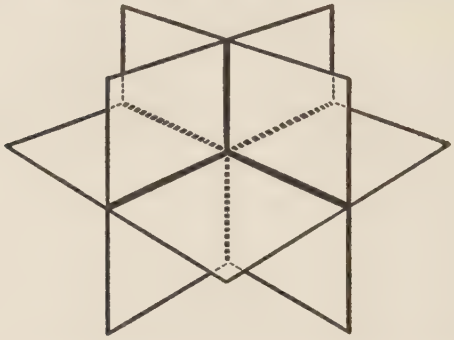
PYTHAGORAS codified and related to one another many ancient ideas on the symbolism of numbers. Evidences of the ideas which he embodied in his system are discovered all over the world dating from the earliest times. Among these is the conception of holy as opposed to profane numbers, the holy being usually odd, and the profane even. Important among these are seven and nine as sacred numbers, and six and eight as of evil, or at best merely secular significance. The better is the enemy of the best; the worst is that which just fails of a high aim; Lucifer is a fallen archangel. Such seems to be a part, at least, of the meaning of this ancient convention.

7 - 1 =

9 - 1 =

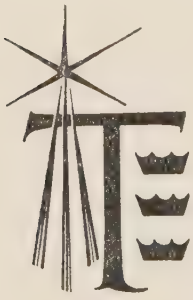
EUCLID was not the inventor of plane geometry, but he was the man who codified and presented to the world of Hellenic culture the ancient science of the Egyptian "string stretchers." The periodic inundations of the Nile, and the resultant destruction of boundary marks, necessitated the development of a practical system of plane surveying. Egyptian, and after it Greek, geometry was therefore a science which concerned itself with areas defined by bounding lines, surfaces with ascertainable limits.

DESCARTES, in a similar way, must not be regarded entirely as the inventor of analytical geometry. What he did was to give a clear, accurate, and disciplined formulation to ideas that had been common human property for countless ages. By means of the Cartesian coördinates, the position of anything in the universe may be located with respect to an all-important center, which is the point of intersection of three planes, representing the three dimensions of space: length, breadth, and depth.



As any position may be located, so also many positions may be correctly related to each other, and all in reference to the central source of all their meaning. Of the six directions so defined — up, down, right, left, front, and back — three have always been associated with goodness and light, and three with darkness and evil. Heaven is above and hell beneath; good is in front and evil behind; right is auspicious and left sinister. Christ praying, lifted his eyes *up* to his Father; Christ in glory sits at the *right* hand of the Father; Christ tempted by the Evil One said, "Get thee *behind* me, Satan."

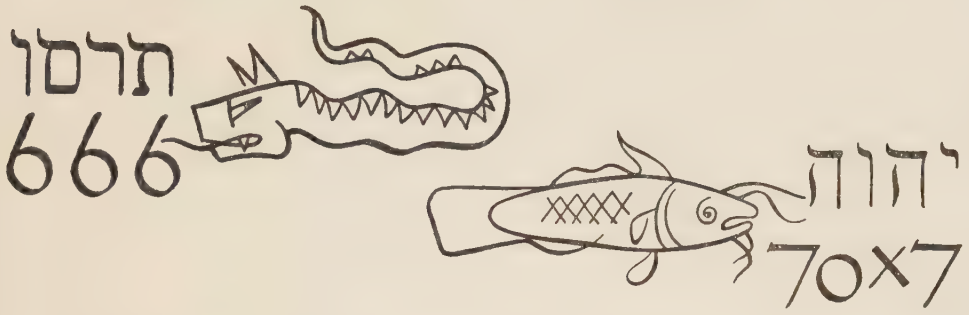
In the strict science of analytic geometry, these traditional attitudes appear as plus and minus quantities. Left, behind, and below are negative; right, before, and above are positive quantities.



THESE considerations have more to do with the question of the proper form of the Christmas star than might at first appear. The pentangular star of our flag is not the correct shape for Christmas on at least three distinct counts. First of all, it is a geometric plane figure, a surface bounded by a line, rather than a point from which straight lines of light ray forth. The emphasis is on the outline rather than on the center. It is a shaped plane surface rather than a point emanating energy in all three dimensions. The pentagram, or as they also called it *pentalpha* (a combination of five A's), was symbolically interesting to the Pythagoreans as a line which, by means of five equal angles of 72 degrees returns to its point of origin. Not only has the figure no center, but by the very method of its construction, its line avoids the center, carefully going all around its locus. Whatever it is, it is no star.

Secondly, the number of rays is wrong. When a star is correctly drawn, so that the emphasis is on the center, then that center has always been regarded as in itself a ray, and that ray of infinitely the greatest significance. As stated before, the rays are simply manifestations of the center, that which IS. Thus, what appears to the untutored eye as a six-rayed star is really seven-rayed; and an eight-rayed star, nine-rayed. It is the point of origin which gives meaning to all things that are, and maintains them in existence. The same idea appears in China where the number five was anciently written as a saltire or X, the

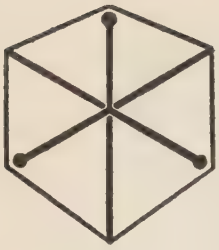
explanation given being that this cross represented the five cardinal points: north, south, east, west, and center. A star of five rays is really therefore, one of six, and six is a definitely unholy number. Six hundred and sixty-six is the number or name of some great demonic power, a perfect, or cubical expression of iniquity, *three* being the perfect number and *six* the iniquitous. "The number of him (the Beast) is six hundred and sixty-six." (Apocalypse 13, 18)



And lastly, there are the historical objections. The *pentalpha* has been traditionally used in magical and diabolic rather than in religious and godly rites. It has been an instrument of witches, warlocks, and necromancers, not of priests and saints. But our modern use of it happily has no such black origins. The stars in the earliest American flag were of six rays, but out of compliment to George Washington, the number was changed to five by act of Congress. Washington's English coat of arms had borne in its chief, three "mullets," or spur rowels, five radiating spikes with a hole pierced through the hub from which they projected. These mullets were erroneously thought of as stars, and the stars of the flag were modified to their general shape. In line with this secular usage, the "stars" subsequently used by so many of the modern nations

are almost invariably of five points. These may stand properly for secular but not for sacred ideas.

The Hebrew "star" of six points, though not open to all these objections, is still far from correct as the proper Christmas form. The number of points is right but they are points — angles — and not, as they should be, rays — lines. In a true star, the center is explicit; here it is only implied. This is a geometric configuration consisting of two interpenetrating equilateral triangles. It is not a star at all, but a seal — the seal of Solomon. Its meaning is not the unity and transcendence of the Creator, but the principle of opposition in his creation. In its complete form, one of the triangles is dark and the other light. The Chinese Yin and Yang figure bears almost the same meaning — the opposition of good and evil, light and darkness, male and female, form and matter, etc. We are most familiar with the idea in its Greek form — the hylomorphic union. In some cultures it has degenerated into Manichaeanism and heresy. But in one shape or another it has appeared wherever men have thought.



A diagram showing three mutually perpendicular planes, their lines of intersection, and their one common point, will throw light on both the seal and the star, their likeness and dissimilarity. The diagram shows space divided into four quadrants. It shows a point from which six lines radiate in six completely independent directions and thus may be considered to penetrate every corner of the universe. It is the *star* which simply expresses these truths. But the same diagram may be taken to express also a duality of opposing principles, and it is the *seal* that carries this meaning. This is no more a star than the Yin and Yang of the Chinese, or Aristotle's form and matter. The seal stands for duality in the creation, and the star for the unity of the Creator. It is not hard to see which symbol is appropriate to Christmas.

HERE is more to it even than this. The sacred stars of six and eight rays have additional meaning as *Chrismons* or Christian monograms. Our Savior's name in Greek is

IHCOYC XPICTOC

The initial letters of these two names are IOTA and CHI. Superimposed on one another they form the star of six rays. We may expand the symbol into a double equation thus:

I & X = ✳ = SOL IUSTITIAE

In the same way the eight-rayed star which is found on Sumerian cylinder seals as far back as 3,000 B.C. forms a Chrismon of even greater succinctness and meaning.

X & + = ✳ = SOL IUSTITIAE

which means: Christ crucified is the very God of Judgment.

Only one word more — about linear stars which are centerless because the rays do not meet. These, surely, are the worst symbols of all; or the best symbols of the most dreadful of concepts. For a centerless star expresses all too plainly the mortal sickness of our secular world, the universe as the secular man sees it. He sees creation with no Creator, a manifestation but nothing manifested, and the material cosmos, that great ship, anchorless. A poisonous hollowness and a consequent despair empty of meaning every department of our life. We get churches without Christ, philosophers without wisdom, education without intellectual training, morals without free will, food without nourishment,

pleasure without joy, man — the responsible animal — without responsibility, sex without fertility, peace without the things that make for peace. We carefully paint the surface while the wood beneath rots away.

The inside is out of everything if we take the inside out of the one, only, single thing that matters. The centerless star symbolizes this tragic state of affairs.

God give us the courage to hope that it may soon begin to mend.

O Dawn, dayspring of eternal splendour, and Sun of Justice, come and enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Psalm-cvi-10.

Segreteria Di Stato
di
Sua Santita
N. 357361

Vatican City, August 25, 1955

Dear Father King,

At the gracious direction of the Holy Father I am privileged to make reply on His behalf to the illuminated address, which the members of the Catholic Art Association prepared and offered to Him on the occasion of their Marian Year Convention.

It was a source of much comfort and consolation to the Holy Father to learn of so many instances of an increase of devotion to Our Blessed Lady during the year specially dedicated to Her. He could not fail, therefore, to appreciate the devoted sentiments expressed in your message and bids me convey to you, as President, and to all the members of the Catholic Art Association, in token of His gratitude and as a pledge of Mary's special protection, His paternal Apostolic Blessing.

With sentiments of religious devotion, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A. Dell' Acqua

LITURGY AND ART

One of the first persons to make efforts to improve liturgical art in this country was Dom Virgil Michel, O.S.B., founder of Oratre Fratres (*now* Worship) *and the Liturgical Press. The present article is from an unpublished manuscript "Liturgy and Catholic Life" written in 1936, two years before his death.*

By Dom Virgil Michel, O.S.B.

Under the influence of individualism and subjectivism *art is bound to go the way of religion,* that is, it will tend more and more to become a private concern, divorced from the public and social aspects of life and, in particular, from its everyday aspects. Art must also be practical, else it will degenerate into dilettantism or aestheticism. Craftsmanship, on the other hand, should also be artistic, else it will become *merely* practical, and that means in our mechanical profit-seeking work, cheap and ugly. In order to keep art wedded to life, then, it must be practical, and the practical must in turn strive to be perfect — thus assuring beauty.

It is here that the liturgical revival may indeed play an important role in the restoration of art to its rightful position in practical life, which will be to the great advantage of the latter. It is significant in this regard that the *Motu proprio* of Pius X, which gave the papal signal for the liturgical revival, was concerned above all with the revival of the traditional Gregorian chant of the Church. It took a strong stand against the inroads of individualism into the musical art of the Church services, and called for social participation in the musical praying of the Mass. The proposal was an eminently practical one from an artistic point of view, since it called for the proper employment of the arts in the very exercise of the liturgical worship, and

that not for a select few churches, but for all without exception. The return of liturgical worship to a high artistic plane was to be universal and popular. "Among the cares of the pastoral office," wrote Pius X, "not only of the supreme chair, which we, though unworthy, occupy through the inscrutable disposition of Providence, but of every local church, a leading one is without question that of maintaining and promoting the decorum of the house of God in which the august mysteries of religion are celebrated, and where the Christian people assemble to receive the grace of the sacraments, to assist at the holy sacrifice of the altar, to adore the most august sacrament of the Lord's Body, and to unite in the common prayer of the Church in the public and solemn liturgical services."

Not only was the revival of Christian art in liturgical worship to be eminently practical in purpose and an element of the common spiritual life of the faithful, but it was to restore that which had been traditionally the heritage of Christianity. However, here also, the papal call showed forth the catholicity and the vitality of the true Christian spirit. In harking back to the old traditions that had been cast off in the gradual loss of the liturgical spirit, and that had been supplanted in part by musical features and renditions that were rather of the earth earthly than of the Christian spirit, there was no returning to the dead letter of the past, and no suppression of the spirit of life that assimilates wherever it finds something of true value of the arts. "The Church has always recognized and favored the progress of the arts," the same *Motu proprio* states, "admitting to the service of religion everything good and beautiful discovered by genius in the course of ages — always, however, with due regard to the liturgical laws. Consequently modern music is also admitted to the Church, since it, too, furnishes compositions of such excellence, sobriety and gravity, that they are in no way unworthy of the liturgical functions."

THE INSPIRATION OF THE LITURGY

The liturgy itself, even when regarded solely from the human standpoint, is a great work of art. While many of its elements were added to it almost by accident of some kind or other, the liturgy as a whole, as well as each of its various lesser rites, is an integral unit, that shows an artistic selectiveness in terms of the purpose to be achieved. In particular is this true of the Roman liturgy. Of this Cram writes as follows: "Beginning with the fourth century, the liturgy became at once and in itself a great work of art, perhaps the greatest. Contrary to general opinion, particularly Protestant, these primitive services of the Church were of extraordinary elaboration and magnificence, the Roman use being by far the simplest of all and much what it is today when, throughout the West, it has become the established rite." (*The Catholic Church and Art,* p. 64).

It is not only the externals of the liturgy that give it an artistic character, but chiefly the depth of human sentiment and aspiration expressed by them; these give it the character of profound art, that should also furnish inspiration for artistic expression and achievement outside the field of the liturgy. In the liturgy, expression is given to the deepest quest the human soul is capable of, that of God himself. In liturgical worship men seek none other than God, the supreme and sovereign good and beauty, the source of other life and beauty. In it men seek to give themselves to God in love, and to unite themselves through Christ ever more fully in a mutual fellowship of love. The liturgy is full of all the profoundest sentiments man is capable of in regard to God. It reflects the awfulness of the house of God, the dwelling-place of the divine Majesty. But it is ever conscious also of the divine love with which he deigned to provide for the salvation of man, and this makes of the house of God the true home of a heavenly Father. Hence it reflects, however dimly, something of the

richness of the divine life, the austerity of divine justice, the simplicity of the all-perfect Being, but all of these as mellowed by the sweetness of his fatherly love.

In the expression of its sentiments the liturgy makes constant use of the sacramental principle; it gives the latter a universal application. In its eyes all the world is a symbol of God, all creation sings forth the beauty of its Creator. Everywhere does it see in the things of time the symbol of eternity, and in nature the symbol of the supernatural. It makes use of all the objects of nature and of all the creations of human skill for the better expression of the ineffable sentiments of the Divine, for revealing as far as humanly possible, the truth and the beauty of the life of God. Its use of symbols is not a suppression, nor an artificial interpretation, of nature, but is based on the natural, God-given purposes of the materials used. It constantly holds forth Christ, the supreme symbol as the most perfect realization of the sacramental principle, the living God as active under the external visible form of man. By further application of the sacramental principle the divine action of Christ is extended throughout time; it transforms man into a symbol of the divine, through whom the sacramental principle is expressed in his personal life of fidelity to Christ and extended into all his environment upon which he must put the universal stamp of Christ. In that way the liturgy itself gives the widest scope and extension to the sacramental principle, which is also the supreme principle of the arts, that of revealing inner mind and spirit through external tangible signs. Next to Christ, among living beings, the highest expression of this sacramental principle is the member of Christ, who as an "other Christ," must give ever greater realization to this principle in the world. In this way all the life of man, and all his actions and contacts, become a living enactment of sacred art, in which the beauty of the truth of Christ is made to shine forth in everything that man does and produces.

There are many other characteristic qualities of the liturgy which are also acknowledgedly those of a genuine art. In the Mass, for instance, as in the other sacramental rites, there is *organic structure* as well as *progressive development.* There are always the preparatory phase, the progressive steps to the climax, the brief climax itself, and then the short aftermath with its final send-off. In the more elaborate rites, the preparatory steps are correspondingly extended, but there is always a quick close after the completion of the essential sacramental action. All the elements and the words that go to make up a rite are integrally connected: gesture, word, music, postures, colors, and vestments. They are all selected and ordered to produce the unified effect that is the purpose of the respective rite. The individual rites are more elaborate for the more important occasions of life, yet ever practical also to the extent of being short where frequent repetition, or administration to large crowds, calls for brevity. In its externals the liturgy demands the same honesty that is required in the inner spirit of participation, i. e., in the disposition of the faithful in whose behalf the rites are administered. Individuals may enter into the rites with false dispositions, but nothing is farther from the intention and the spirit of the liturgy itself; it is ever frank and honest down to the minutest detail of its requirements. In this regard it demands the fullest artistic performance of its rites, that is, in sentiment and action, in gesture and materials, it must always be completely what it proposes to be: true, honest, durable, serviceable, well done, to the point, etc. Nothing is farther from the mind of the liturgy than haphazard action, cheap or gaudy display, falsity or sham of any kind.

Over against so much of the individualistic and materialistic art of our day, with its depressive pessimism and its emptiness, the art of the liturgy is eminently

optimistic. Part of its mission is to buoy up the tired human heart, to renew its spirit, not by a momentary hypnotism of atmosphere, but by leading to the fundamental divine Source of all life. The art of the liturgy must always be an angel of comfort to the human soul, inspiring it to an exercise of the divine virtues of faith, hope,

and charity. Its message is always the joyous hope of the resurrection, even when it is replete with the message of mortification and death, as in Lent.

Since the sacramental principle is of the essence of the liturgy and at the same time eminently a principle of art, it is in the liturgy that art finds its most natural sphere. The function of art in the liturgy is in no way forced, since it enters into the very fiber of the liturgical action. Thus music, the highest of the liturgical arts, enters into the life and action of the liturgy most intimately. It is in no way a mere enhancement of the environment, but an integral element in the liturgy as performed after the ideal pattern set by the Church. For that reason also, liturgical art addresses itself to all men without exception. There is nothing esoteric about it, it must be as catholic as the liturgy itself. Every member of the Church can rightfully expect to be affected by liturgical art as he must also contribute to the general appreciation that makes for better liturgical art. "Every faithful member," says Abbot Herwegen in this regard, "takes a stand over against church art, not only the clergy, the artist, or the visitor to the church service, but above all every educated man. All have a right not to be offended in their feelings by the ecclesiastical art, but rather to derive from it edification and joy." And again: "Not only the artist, but every Catholic, above all the educated man, is called to build up a world from within, and thus to coöperate towards the creation of a fellowship such as is needed by the liturgical artist. The creative artist has a right to demand that the fellowship possesses the right maturity in order to understand him. To coöperate in that respect is the duty of every member of the fellowship for the better interest of sacred art, apart entirely from still higher interests" (*Lumen Christi,* pp. 70 and 82).

The liturgical artist is then by virtue of his position and especially of our conditions today a Christian educator. All art performs the function of cultural education by virtue of the fact that it is the embodiment of a highly spiritual content of some kind; but liturgical art educates men to Christian truths and ideals in particular, and has the function also of elevating its admirers towards Christ. The liturgical artist, in fact, performs a sacerdotal function in his art since it must help to fulfil the purpose of the liturgy. This is not so much by conscious design but by virtue of the very nature of art. Far from being a matter of studied design, all art must derive rather from a spontaneous inspiration out of the inner depths of the artist.

To produce Christian liturgical art then, the artist must be fully under the inspiration of the true Christian spirit. Here, as in all Christian life, productivity must be productivity for God. And how can that be attained unless the artist learns to die

unto himself with Christ in order to live unto God? Even liturgical art will reflect the artist, but its aim is not to glorify the artist but God. For the artist, the word of the psalmist will hold also in regard to his creative work: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to thy name give glory." (Ps. 113, I). Just because his work has that aim, but will nevertheless reflect his personality, it is imperative for the artist to be steeped in the mind of Christ, to be a true Christian under penalty of otherwise not really producing Christian art. The liturgical artist above all must be an active member of the mystical body of Christ. As a baptized sharer in the priesthood of Christ, he must drink deep at the indispensable source of active participation in the sacrificial offering. As a confirmed apostle he must be active in every way in the priestly apostolate of the laity. He must live the Christlife fully; it must permeate his whole being. Then whatever inspiration he puts into his artistic endeavors will also breathe this spirit, and will spontaneously fulfill the purpose of true liturgical art. In no other way can he really accomplish such purpose.

The whole matter of liturgical art was recently summarized tersely as follows: "Men — those border-line creatures between the realm of spirit and the world of matter — need truths incarnate in beautiful material things in order that they may more readily know, more deeply love, and more sincerely admire them. Truth itself became incarnate to show us the Father, and in the Word-made-flesh we saw his glory, the glory, as it were, of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The artist who carves that Word-made-flesh upon a cross must know him through prayer and through the study of his revelation (theology) in order that, *modo suo,* he may reveal, in stone or wood or metal, the fullness of his grace and truth." (The Rev. Gerald B. Phelan in a letter to *Liturgical Arts,* Vol. V, 1936, p. 36.)

How far we have departed from this ideal can be seen at every turn. Many of our church buildings seem to have been inspired by anything but the liturgy. Much of what pretends to be artistic in them is but the cheapest and most gaudy exhibition of what our bourgeois commercialism has done with the traditional ideals of our Christian heritage. Again, in many instances, the "artistic" features of our churches are determined not by the traditional wisdom of the liturgy, but by the individualistic quirks of pious donors, who litter the church walls, or even the altar itself, with ornaments and statues of all sorts, entirely unrelated to the aims and spirit of liturgical worship. As such they are a distraction and an offense, and in spite of good intentions must be adjudged as works of evil rather than of good.

Liturgical art is necessarily social and collective in its nature, at least in its practical inspiration and appreciation, if not in its execution, say, in the erection of a church building, as it was in the Middle Ages. Of these ages of Christian life we read, "In the Middle Ages, the building of a church was, infinitely more than in our present age, an integral part of the life of the community; for the whole people was a unit inspired collectively by the needs of the Church. . . . Whatever the motives, church-building was shot through and through with an enthusiastic spirit of community effort" ("Pre-Gothic Architecture: A Mirror of the Social-Religious Renaissance of the Eleventh Century" by Loren Carey Mackinney, *Speculum,* Vol. II (1927), pp. 31 and 23). Something of this communal appreciation of church art must be regained by us, since that is of the nature of the liturgy itself. Who knows but that the liturgical revival, in regaining this character for its art, may not also be the inspiration for a return to a more social art in general, and so help to give meaning to the abundant futilities and fill the great emptiness of so much of our subjectivistic and individualistic art?

BOOK REVIEWS

MARITAIN, JACQUES
Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry
The first volume of the A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts. New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1953, 423 pp., 68 plates, $6.50; Meridian Books, Noonday press, 1955, 339 pp., $1.35.

HOWEVER difficult it may be to arrive at anything like a just estimate of this work, which is replete with dangerous fallacies, it is only fitting to take note, first of all, of its central aim. This is to show how, in addition to common-sense, scientific, philosophic, and infused knowledge, there is still another kind which should be carefully distinguished and respected in its own right, namely, "poetic" knowledge: the knowledge that is intuitive in the sense that it is born of direct vision and love, rather than of discursive reasoning. M. Maritain here shows himself anxious to have us realize that such knowledge could be almost as profound as is prophetic or infused knowledge, and that it requires, for proper appreciation, that we "set" ourselves for the reception of it with a full awareness of its uniqueness: we are not to approach a picture or a poem as if it were nothing but a moral lesson, a syllogism, a diagram, or a map. Moreover, we ought to see that certain men have a native talent for arriving at the more profound insights of this kind of knowledge and for embodying these effectively. Their works are not to be judged by Philistine or pedestrian minds, or even by minds, however philosophic, which have no understanding of intuition.

In all this, M. Maritain is simply setting forth, or exploring, a theory not unlike that stated by Ruskin in the chapter "Renaissance Grotesque" of *Stones of Venice:*

> "I believe, however, that the noblest forms of imaginative power are also in some sort ungovernable, and have in them something of the character of dreams; so that the vision, of whatever kind, comes uncalled, and will not submit itself to the seer, but conquers him, and forces him to speak as a prophet, having no power over his words or thoughts. . . .
>
> ". . . This opposition of art to inspiration is long and gracefully dwelt upon by Plato in his *Phaedrus;* using, in the course of his argument, almost the words of St. Paul: 'It is the testimony of the ancients, *that the madness which is of God is a nobler thing than the wisdom which is of men;* and again, 'He who sets himself to any work with which the Muses have to do (i. e., to any of the fine arts) 'without madness, thinking that by art alone he can do his work sufficiently, will be found vain and incapable, and the work of temperance and rationalism will be thrust aside and obscured by that of inspiration.' The passages to the same effect, relating especially to poetry, are innumerable in nearly all ancient writers; but in this of Plato, the entire compass of the fine arts is intended to be embraced.
>
> "No one acquainted with other parts of my writings will suppose me to be an advocate of idle trust in the imagination. But it is in these days just as necessary to allege the supremacy of genius as the necessity of labour; for there never was, perhaps, a period in which the peculiar gift of the painter was so little discerned, in which so many and so vain efforts have been made to replace it by study and toil. . . ."

Unfortunately, in maintaining a position somewhat like this, though far more romantic, M. Maritain has worked out a pseudo-Thomistic theory of art which, if taken uncritically, could have very unfortunate consequences.

Here are a few of its main presuppositions and implications: —

1) *That there are no periods of decadence in art.* Every later period, it would

seem, is an evolution of, even when it is a reaction against, its predecessor. Modern art, therefore, coming last is — the conclusion is obvious.

2) *That St. Thomas distinguished the man of art from the man of prudence.* St. Thomas did, of course, nothing of the sort. He simply distinguished between two kinds of virtues "of the practical order": the virtue of art and the virtue of prudence, both of which he attributes to every man since they are only two of every man's five intellectual virtues. To say that there are two kinds of men here, and to emphasize their distinction, is, in effect, to give to the virtues of prudence and art a kind of physical separateness that is wholly unwarranted. It is to suggest such nonsense as that a man of art is never a man of prudence; that a man of prudence is never a man of art and, being devoid of art, may well be entirely incapable of understanding the man of art; and that a man of art need not, *as a man of art,* be a man of prudence.

Yet it is simply absurd to suppose that a man of art can ignore the necessities of prudential thinking. Whenever he accepts any assignment, he simply must, as we say, "figure": like everyone else, he has to consider resources, time, unforeseen difficulties, likelihood of revisions, etc., if he is to be at all sure of the conditions under which he will have to practice his art and therefore the limitations imposed upon it. One of the greatest achievements of the Middle Ages was that of prudently establishing and conducting the guild system, whereby artists were enabled to ensure the patronage, apprenticeship, lofty code, security, and social recognition required for the developing and exercising of their skill freely, enthusiastically, and charitably.

Moreover, to imply that the man of prudence is never the man of art is to overlook the fact — as M. Maritain does, strangely enough — that one of the eight integral parts of prudence is *solertia* (also spelled *sollertia*) which by derivation means, "the art of the individual."

3) *That the servile artist and the fine artist are, in every way different.* Yet this is not true, either of the ends they cherish or of the technique they employ.

When M. Maritain says that the "servile" artist pays little or no heed to beauty, being interested primarily in satisfying a need, the implications are: that if you are not interested in something primarily, you are not interested in it at all; and that it is normal in all societies, from the primitive on up, for neither patron nor artist to regard the aesthetic and ritual fitness of things of use — as if a sacral society, rather than a secular, were not, both humanly and historically, the normal one.

Furthermore, there is a subtle denial here (coming very strangely from a Thomist) of the transponibility of the transcendentals. If whatever is good, is, to that extent, beautiful, then it is very unfortunate to suggest that beauty is somehow nugatory and dispensable. And certainly M. Maritain must know very little about craftsmen if he thinks that when they step off from a piece of work and say, "That's good!" they do not really mean, as well, "That's beautiful!"

Again, to say that the servile artist follows fixed rules which the fine artist goes beyond, since the fine artist exercises "creative intuition," is also to imply something untrue, namely, that the shoemaker, for example, makes each new pair of shoes exactly like the last pair — all patrons, all materials, all styles, all conditions of use being so similar as to call for little or no ingenuity in dealing with them, and certainly no intuition.

Nor is it any more sensible to say that servile art serves a need, but that fine art is "purposeless." This amounts to saying that man has no need for profound aesthetic experience and that no artist of any rank ever sought assignments or guided himself in any way by the wishes of his public. While this freedom from "constraint" by patrons may be true of some,

it is certainly not true of all artists: while it may apply to the gods of the present (like Chagall, Chirico, Cezanne, and Picasso) it does not apply to the demi-gods of the past (like Michael Angelo, Fra Angelico, and El Greco).

4) *That creative subjectivity is the key to the greatest art.* Yet what is this creative subjectivity, with its "creative emotion" which M. Maritain never identifies (is it fear, reverence, enthusiasm, love, hope, joy, or what?) and its "creative intuition," which he never distinguishes from or correlates with that of the cogitative sense and that of the possible intellect? If it is, in fact, the key to the greatest art, why do we not search for it and cherish it in the work, let us say, of Homer or Shakespeare? From the Iliad and the Odyssey, who can tell what kind of person Homer was? As a blind man, what kind of trauma did he suffer from — and how does the effect of it show in his every scene? Or who, from reading Shakespeare's plays, could ever have imagined that this man was nicknamed "gentle Will"?

5) *That the agonies which arise from the frustrations of men who are thrown in on themselves in a society that has lost all sense of the vocational interdependence of its members is the normal source of great art.* And yet it is a miracle that the poor, unhappy, lonely ones of the left bank have ever produced as much as they have. To make out that their loneliness, their isolation, their compensatory individualism and eccentricity are the proper source of whatever greatness they may possess is simply to confirm the romantic delusion that the artist is condemned to be a kind of outcast — neither a member of society nor a member of the Mystical Body, but a kind of pseudo- or neurotic Suffering Servant. He is an artistic victim soul who is to be left to his fate since it is good for him to suffer and so "engender in beauty" the masterpieces which a few aesthetes will appreciate, but never buy.

Much could also be said about M. Maritain's weirdly unscientific style, with its continuous abuse of the pathetic fallacy and its sometimes very comic "poetic" phrasing ("Art, bitten by poetry, seeks to free itself from reason.") Suffice it to say that had M. Maritain used a more carefully Thomistic language, he might have avoided many of the errors he has fallen into; and he might have made it possible to judge his insights more accurately and surely. What, for instance, is meant by "poetry become conscious of itself"? — that poets become more conscious of themselves? — and is that a good thing? All through the book, one is troubled by such questions, which, after all, should never be the kind called forth by the style of a true follower of St. Thomas.

Useful, therefore, as this work is in raising certain questions beyond those raised by Thomas Gilby, O.P., in his *Poetic Experience,* it seems altogether too much like a defense of the ivory tower set forth by a neo-Platonic Bergsonian writing in the style of Hegel.

John Julian Ryan

The Golden Bible for Children . . . The New Testament
Edited and arranged by ELSA JANE WERNER. Illustrated by ALICE and MARTIN PROVENSEN. New York: Simon and Schuster, 96 pp., $3.50.

The Golden Bible is intended for children, but it should rejoice the heart of any perceptive adult as well. It seems an exceptionally successful book from many points of view, and particularly successful in its illustrations. These are the work of Alice and Martin Provensen, and are altogether delightful. They are done with a combination of simple line and flat washes of color, in a sort of free adaptation of the style of medieval illuminations, and, as in medieval illuminations, the scenes are not in the least naturalistic, but quite realistic. That is, perspective, literal proportion, the

use of color gradation and shadows — all the devices of the naturalistic representation of appearance — have not been the concern of these artists. Instead, they have reduced the reality of everything to its simplest aspect, emphasizing the characteristics which make it specifically itself. There is enough detail to intrigue a child, yet everything — people, houses, plants, animals — is so simply and decoratively drawn that a child might be tempted to try his hand at making a flower or a fish in the same direct, easily understood way. The contrast between these lovely, imaginative modern illuminations and the sentimental Bible pictures that children are so often brought up on is very obvious.

It is wonderful that this beautifully thought out and executed book could be produced inexpensively enough to make it available to almost any family with children to profit by it.

Nancy Price

BOUYER, REV. LOUIS

Liturgical Piety

Volume I of the University of Notre Dame Liturgical Studies. Notre Dame Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1955. 284 pp., $4.75.

Liturgical scholarship in the United States has been almost non-existent. The University of Notre Dame has since 1947, however, exercised the vital role of introducing Americans to European liturgical scholarship through its Summer Liturgy program. Notre Dame has done this by inviting noted European liturgical scholars to lecture on various parts or aspects of the sacred liturgy during its Summer Session.

Now the University has embarked on the ambitious program of making these lectures available in book form so that all might have access to them. The first volume of Liturgical Studies to appear contains the lectures given by the learned French convert Oratorian, Louis Bouyer. It is entitled *Liturgical Piety.*

Liturgical Piety is an answer to the fundamental question, "What is the liturgy?" It considers what the liturgy is as a basis of Christian living according to the traditional concept of Christian spirituality. It clears the way by first discussing the false conceptions of the last few centuries and the various liturgical movements of the recent past and present. With the way thus cleared, it enters into a most important discussion which defines the liturgy as "the mystery." It then applies "the mystery" to the Mass, Sacraments, liturgical year, and Divine Office. All this is done in a most scholarly fashion. There is also a valuable appendix-summary of liturgical scholars and scholarship.

The great merit of this book is its introduction of English readers to the vast store of scholarly research into the essence of liturgy which has gone on in Europe both within and without the Church over the past century. It sets a stage in proper historical background, summarizes the best thought available on the essence of liturgy, and thereby gives Americans a solid basis for their scholarly research and participation in the liturgical movement. Probably its greatest boon is the introduction to the work of the late great Benedictine monk and scholar, Odo Casel of Maria Laach. One would hope that this introduction might serve as a stimulus to the translation into English of Dom Casel's major works.

The shortcomings of this volume are unfortunately pronounced. Principally, Father Bouyer is never as precise and clear as one might legitimately expect him to be even though he is dealing in the realm of mystery. One feels that Abbot Gueranger has been unfortunately dealt with in the early pages of the volume and one sometimes wonders if the author has completely read and understands Odo Casel's "mystery" theory. Many of these shortcomings can, of course, be explained by the fact that the chapters of the book were written as individual lectures to be spoken, not read.

But the content, and particularly the introduction, to "the mystery" so completely recommends the book that its shortcomings must be suffered. There is no other comparable introduction to the liturgy and liturgical scholarship in English. For the American who is slowly awakening to a sense of Christian vocation and beginning to find in the life of the Church the life of his own spirit, it is perhaps the most important scholarly work of the 20th century. For the artist and art patron it is, of course, at least of equal importance, for, as was emphasized at the recent national convention of the Catholic Art Association, the liturgy is the source of our artistic inspiration, the formal cause of our making, and the final cause directly of so much of our work.

Thomas W. Phelan

C.A.A. CONVENTION REPORT

The 1955 National Convention of the Catholic Art Association was held at the College of St. Rose, Albany, New York, from the 18th to 21st of August.

Besides the meetings of the officers and the carrying out of the usual convention business, the convention was envisaged as an opportunity for the assembled members to discuss together one very important subject — the relationship between the Arts and the Liturgy. The program was planned to facilitate such discussion with a minimum of four formal lectures — two on each of the two main days of session — and as much time as possible left free for informal discussion of the theme. The subjects chosen for the lectures were an introduction, by Dom Damasus Winzen, O.S.B., in which he defined the true nature of art and of liturgy and thus showed their proper relationship; architecture, by Mr. Graham Carey; the sacrificial vestments, by Rev. Thomas Phelan; and sacred music, by Dr. Ethel Thurston. The lecture on architecture was supplemented by an evening slide lecture by Miss de Bethune, which illustrated from her own architectural work some of the points made by Mr. Carey.

In order to focus attention most sharply on the chosen theme of the convention, there were no exhibits shown except those which were actually of liturgical interest. The exhibition was small, but of unusually high quality. A larger exhibition would necessarily have lowered the standard of artistic excellence of the objects shown. Among them the most striking were perhaps the chasubles which were the combined work of Valentine Kilbride of England and Clemens Schmidt of Germany, the liturgical vessels made by Robert Clare of Boston, and two sets of calligraphic altar cards by Clemens Schmidt and Crimilda Pontes of Bristol, Rhode Island. There was also a reading room equipped with a very rich assortment of books and periodicals illustrative of the convention theme.

The central point of the convention was daily Mass. The formal lectures, the informal discussions, the business meetings, and the exhibitions were all ancillary to the day's chief event. As far as possible the three arts which were chosen to illustrate the theme, architecture, vesture, and music, were supplied by the conveners themselves. The wooden table altar and the platform on which it stood in the middle of the room assigned for that purpose were built by Father Phelan and his assistants. The vestments and other accessories used were brought from the exhibition room to be used in the service for which they were designed. The music was supplied by the voices of the participants who practiced the chant together under the direction of Dr. Thurston. The more difficult parts were taken by a schola of eight voices chosen by Dr. Thurston. The

Daprato Library
of Ecclesiastical Art

Mass on the first day was a recited one, and on the second day it was sung. There were offertory and communion processions, and during each Mass the priest faced the people from a central altar. On each evening, Compline was chanted in English.

The only piece of business to be mentioned here was the unanimous vote taken by the officers to make it a matter of general policy to associate our organization in some informal way with the "Liturgical Week." The officers all felt that such a collaboration would be of advantage to both organizations.

On Sunday, August 21, there was a field trip by bus and car to Benson, Vermont, where Mass was celebrated in the nearly completed church of Christ Sun of Justice.

Those responsible for the 1955 Convention felt that their hope for its success were realized, and recommend that in future conventions the liturgy be more strongly emphasized than formerly. The Catholic Art Association is particularly indebted to the College of St. Rose for the gracious hospitality extended, and for an unusual coöperation which ensured the success of this convention.

NOTES

UNANIMOUS DECISION of the officers convening in Albany in August, makes a raise in subscription price of the *Quarterly* effective with this issue for new subscribers and on expiration of subscription for others.

Regular price:	$5.00
Foreign:	6.00
Institutional:	8.50

Student group rate in lots of 6 or more is $3.50 each.

This raise in price is necessitated by increased costs of publication.

MARIAN COLLEGE, Indianapolis, will be the site of the East Central Regional Meeting of the Catholic Art Association on December 22. The theme will be "The Holy Father's Program for Art." Further information may be obtained from the Regional Director, Sister Esther, S.P., St. Mary-of the-Woods College, Indiana.

NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY announces a Mestrovic Exhibition as an attraction of the 1955 Festival of the Arts. The exhibition will be on display every week day in the Art Gallery of O'Shaughnessy Building until January 31.

SISTER AUGUSTA, S.C., editor of the *College and Seminar Newsletter* has been granted a year's leave of absence from the College of Mount St. Joseph-on-the-Ohio. She will devote her time to painting at the Pius XII Institute in Florence. During her absence, Miss de Bethune will take over the work of the *Newsletter.*

WILLIAM V. CLADEK made the cover design for this issue, which is the first in a series portraying heavenly light in four of its aspects. This design shows the star as guide.

The cover design of the supplement to this issue is also the work of Mr. Cladek Originally it was used on the Easter, 1949, issue of the *Quarterly.*

PAUL MARX, O.S.B., of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, has graciously made available the article, "Liturgy and Art," of Dom Virgil Michel. He is currently engaged at Catholic University writing a book, *The Life and Work of Virgil Michel, O.S.B.*

LIVING STONES of Architecture, by Mr. Graham Carey, is included with this issue as a special Christmas supplement. The paper was originally presented at the 1955 C.A.A. National Convention at the College of St. Rose in Albany. Additional copies at seventy-five cents each may be had from the C.A.A. Secretary, 53 Ridgewood Road, Buffalo 20, New York.